



The Senior Scene

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THE SENIORS of the GROVE



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For 20 years I have been given the opportunity to share my enthusiasm and belief that we all must stay engaged, connected, and given opportunities to learn and play no matter our ages or our abilities!

I LOVE this picture. Doesn't it look like they are both having a fabulous time? And the words are so true, too. Play, however you define it, is such an important part of our life. When you watch a baby or a young child, their play is discovery and knowledge building. As I watch Adalyn (now 3 1/2 months) reach and turn, twist and shake her toys, the delight of what she can do and the noises she makes in celebration is wonderful. Joel, who is 3 years, loves rough-house play, and outside play just as much as he loves to color and "cook." We

have so much fun together rolling down the hill outside of my townhome, playing "catch me and tickle," enjoying a matching card game, or cooking together in his kitchen. I know he is learning as he plays, but he also gets to express himself and just have fun. It is also good for me. Playing with both of the kids helps me to relieve the stress of the day, forget that to-do list, use some too-little used muscles, and laugh and have fun.

It is interesting that as I get older and am not involved in chasing my kids to events and happenings, I find my play time is also changing. My husband and I enjoy riding bikes, walking regularly through Elm Creek Park; and we recently took up the game of Pickleball. In the winter we love to snowshoe, and cribbage by a roaring fire is always perfect. Our play, like that of the kids, is teaching us something new, giving us opportunities to stretch both our minds and our bodies, and provides both solitude and social time. Play is wonderful!

I think the greatest gift that play gives us is joy. Finding joy every day in our busy and sometimes challenging lives can be tough. I hope that through the work of many volunteers and staff you have the opportunity to find time to play, and thus find joy through the programs offered at the Community Center.

As the election cycle comes to an end (thankfully), the holidays kick in full swing, and another year passes by us (too quickly), I challenge you to take a risk, try something new, experience a different place, meet different people, laugh like a kid learning to ride a bike. PLAY!

May you remember 2016 as filled with blessings, and may 2017 bring you only more!

Kris

Good Old Days

Remembering the Many Hunting Trips on Maple Grove Farms

When I drive west on County Road 30 from the freeway past Menards, Walgreens, WalMart, Sam's Club and the list goes on, it's hard to remember when that was farm country. I get especially nostalgic when I go past the spot where the Herman Priebe farm was. The big slough on the northeast corner of Lawndale Lane and County Road 30 brings back lots of memories. It's hard to see it now with a walking path, complete with chain link fence alongside of it.

Priebe's Slough was a magnet for ducks. In winter when it froze, pheasants called it home. Lots of pheasants! As Bruce Hansen and I reminisced about it the other day, we said, "We didn't know how good we had it until we didn't have it any more." The first time we were going to venture into Priebe's Slough, Alfred Schutte told us to carry a short board with us in the game pouch of our hunting jackets. "That slough doesn't have a bottom. If you start getting pulled into the muck, unless you have a board to kneel on and pull your feet out, you're a goner," Alfred cautioned.

Sure enough, Bruce and I were slogging through the slough when a blue-wing teal jumped up. I shot at it with my 20-gauge pump, and down it came. I went to retrieve it. When I got to the duck and stopped to pick it up, I began sinking in the mud. Pull as I might, I couldn't get my left foot out of the mud. I took the board out of my game pouch and knelt on it. I pulled and pulled, and the mud would not release my foot.

I was wearing hip boots. They had a strap around the belt in my pants. I unstrapped the strap and



pulled my foot out of the boot. I pulled and pulled, but the swamp would not give up my boot. I picked up my board and duck, and Bruce and I made our way out to the gravel road and headed back to the Koehler farm. Walking down the road with one hip boot and one wet stocking foot is the thing memories are made of.

Years later people from the highway department learned the hard way what Alfred Schutte had told us about Priebe's Slough. Werner Schulz recorded this event in the Osseo Press:

"Folks from the highway department chose to ignore the warnings about the slough having no bottom. After burying not one but two caterpillars in the slough, they changed their minds and abandoned the project they were working on."

Ah, the stories that slough could share if only it could talk. The people walking around it for exercise would never believe them. There is no reason to venture into the slough anymore unless, of course, I think I might be able to get that hip boot back.

... Contributed by James Sable

A man said to the psychiatrist, "Doc, every time I get into bed, I think there's somebody under it. You gotta help me!"

"Come to me three times a week for two years, and I'll cure your fears," said the shrink.

"And, I'll only charge you \$200 a visit."

"I'll think about it," replied the man.

Six months later the doctor met the man on the street and asked why he never came to see him.

"For two hundred bucks a visit?" said the man. "A bartender cured me for ten dollars."

"Is that so!" replied the psychiatrist, "How?"

The man answered, "He told me to cut the legs off the bed."

Team Players – Or Not

Three Strikes and You're Out!

This goes back to my high school days at Alexandria, MN, where as a Sophomore, I went out for basketball. I Got Cut – Darn – I just wasn't good enough. But I wanted to get a letter in sports in the WORST Way! So I tried out as a Junior. I got cut again! I had improved but according to the basketball coach, "NOT ENOUGH!" This time as a Senior, I was really determined to make the team; but, alas, once again I was cut. Really, if you are cut 2 years in a row, you are supposed to get the message. As disappointed as I was, I said to myself, "I have to get a letter somehow." That was more important to me than graduating, of which I was NOT in any danger.

So, I went to the track coach. Now remember, it was spring in 1958 and the very end of my Senior Year. The track coach was very nice and said we don't have anyone to run the 440 -yard race, so I said I would give it a try. Later I found out the 440 was a quarter of a mile, which was a long way to run.

I was determined to give it a try. In my first attempt I came in second to last and was a bit discouraged. Should I continue? YES, I can do it! Each day after school I continued to practice and run-run-run. Lo and behold, at the District Track Meet in Glenwood, I ran the 440 in 55 seconds and finished 3rd, contributing 3 points to the winning district event. I received my letter at graduation and felt really good about it. HORRAY!!

Now, 58 years later, I can't remember whatever happened to my prize possession that I worked so hard for.

... contributed by Tom Seeger



Vikings vs Packers

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a season when neither the Packers nor the Vikings made the post-season playoff. It seemed so unusual that the management of both teams got together and decided that there should be some sort of competition between the two teams because of their great rivalry.

So, they decided on a week-long ice fishing competition. The team that catches the most fish at the end of the week wins.

They began their contest on a cold northern Minnesota lake. The first day, after eight hours of fishing, the Vikings caught 100 fish and the Packers had zero. At the end of the second day, the Vikings had caught 200 fish, and the Packers had zero.

That evening the Packers' coach got his team together and said, "I suspect some kind of cheating is taking place." So the next morning he dressed one of his players in purple and gold and sent him over to the Viking camp to act as a spy. At the end of the day, he came back to report to the coach.

The coach asked, "Well, how about it, are they cheating?"

"They sure are," the player reported. "They're cutting holes in the ice!!"

... contributed by Eileen Lackman



Community

20 Years Strong

This month marks 20 years since the first senior program happened in Maple Grove. I've spent the past 2 issues remembering the growth of the program and the people who have participated in that growth. A look at the current calendar only shows you that there are many choices every day to try and pique your interest. Art, Creative, Education, Fitness, Social, and Travel are all opportunities offered through the 55 Forward programs here at the Community Center and scattered around town.

What is next, you might ask. Only time will tell. The honest answer is that we are running out of space here at the Community Center to offer many more ongoing/regular programs. The main Senior Center room is booked with classes, events, cards, etc. throughout the day, every day. There has been discussion about making our space larger (moving the wall and taking some of the Maze Lobby). There will be some additional space added in the City, so additional fitness classes will be offered. There have been dreams of a parking ramp added to the Community Center parking. All of these are dreams, but you have to start with a dream to make it real. So, in the next few years, watch for the challenge of space to be met with some expansion and creative solutions.

I also think we'll continue to see changes in the programs and desires of participants. Only 4 years ago we started Pickleball, and now we have over 200 people participating on a regular basis. We actually taught over 150 new folks just this summer who aren't counted in the "regular player" ranks yet. It is my goal that every quarter we offer something new or different so that we can stay current, find the "thing" that people want, and continue to provide a strong program for people of all walks of life.

Here's to another 20 years. It won't have me at the helm for most of those years, but I know that the base of what we created will remain strong for many decades. Thanks to all of you for helping me to create a dynamic, changing program for 20 years. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

... Kris Orluck

True Friends

This is a story of two little girls, one in a raggedy dress, one with a pair of roller skates. It's a lesson on friendship and sharing. It was the year of 1947 and a warm summer day. My family lived in Hurst Bush, IL. My friend lived across the street. Her name was Brenda, and I loved playing and just being with her. When we played hide and seek, I would take a box and curl up under it. I can still hear Brenda running by the box, calling, "Ann, Ann"! It was so hard to keep quiet, because I would giggle and giggle.

One day that summer I put my babydolls in my little red wagon and pulled them up and down the sidewalk. All of a sudden I heard Brenda calling, "Ann, come quick." I ran across the street and asked, "What's wrong?" She said, "I have an idea." "What?" I asked. I noticed Brenda had her hands behind her back. She asked, "You want to skate with me?" I said, "Brenda, I don't have any skates." Brenda smiled real big, put her right hand out to me, and one of her skates was in it. I asked, "What are you talking about, Brenda?" She suggested that I wear one of the skates, and she would wear the other. "We will hold hands, and we can skate together." I was thrilled to learn the aspect of sharing, and that filled my heart with joy! I got that skate on in lickety-split time. Brenda took my hand, and we skated and skated, up and down the street until it was supper time.

I surely hated to see that magical day with my best friend end.

One pair of skates, two hearts, and one beautiful summer day. My, how those skates must have been blessed. Well, the skates are rusty, the friendship is gone; but the memory of that day will last forever!

... Annalizabeth



To Your Health

Paging Dr. Google

The minute we have an ache, a pain, or a symptom, many of us turn to the internet for answers. It's smart to arm yourself with as much knowledge as possible, mainly because it stands to reason that no one doctor can be expected to stay current on every last piece of research on every medical subject. The problem, however, is that the internet can be an overwhelming resource on the subject of health care. Along with credible information, it is also crowded with people and companies that may manipulate research for their own gain or simply interpret it incorrectly and lead us toward useless, or even harmful remedies.

A good place to start your online medical search is by visiting websites that are dedicated to the disease in question and run by nonprofits such as the Arthritis Foundation, the American Heart Association, or the American Diabetes Association. In addition, it is best to search sites ending in *.org*, *.edu*, or *.gov*. These define non-profits, universities, or governmental institutions that are not supported by profit-making corporations such as drug or insurance companies, or by anyone selling their own "magic" cure. There are also good *.com* sites, but since they are commercial by nature and easily created and operated by anyone, the validity of their information can be questionable. My rule of research is to find three credible sources that all say the same thing.

So, how do we approach our doctors if we've found information that they hadn't mentioned, or perhaps data that appears to contradict their advice? It's always good to acknowledge your physician's expertise by saying that you came across something interesting online and would like an opinion about it. I've done this in two different ways. For my annual check-up (when we allow more time), I take a copy of any pertinent written information that I'm curious about (complete with credible sources) so that my doctor can give me an opinion, keep the information to check later, or just put it in my file as a reminder of our discussion.

In between the annual visits, if symptoms pop up, I do online research to find out if I have to worry.

Just last week I was washing my hands and found a small but pronounced bump/lump in the middle of my palm. I checked online to find that 60 percent of people who find a bump in their palm have Dupuytren's Contracture, which could result in my ring finger and pinky being slowly pulled in toward my palm over the next 25 years or so. We don't know what causes it, and there is no effective treatment. The rest of the people with palm bumps most likely have a ganglion cyst. Neither of these possibilities seemed critical to me. Still, I sent an email to my doctor to see if I needed to make an appointment or if we could just wait until my next annual check. I received a reply the next day saying it sounded like a ganglion cyst, and it could wait.

In my mind, checking credible medical sites online is a way of collaborating with my doctor, taking responsibility for my own health, and keeping me out of clinics full of sick people who might be contagious!

... Contributed by Virginia Hanson



Smiles

Riddle for Seniors

Here is the situation:

You are on a horse, galloping at a constant speed.

On your right side is a sharp drop-off.

On your left side is an elephant traveling at the same speed as you.

Directly in front of you is a galloping kangaroo, and your horse is unable to overtake it.

Behind you is a lion running at the same speed as you and the kangaroo.

What must you do to get out of this highly dangerous situation?

(See answer on page 12)

A retired man who volunteered to entertain patients went to a local hospital, taking his keyboard with him.

When he finished singing for one older gentleman, he said, "I hope you get better."

The elderly gentlemen replied, "I hope you get better, too."

The bank robber shoved a note across to the teller which read, "Put the money in a bag, sucker, and don't make a move."

The teller pushed back another note. "Straighten your tie, stupid, they're taking your picture."

Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.

Dr. Seuss: "You have a brain in your head

You have feet in your shoes

You can take yourself in any direction you choose."

I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.

Always put off until tomorrow what you shouldn't do at all.

Humorous Signs

In a Shoe Repair Store:

We will heel you,

We will save your sole,

We will even dye for you.

At an Optometrist's Office:

If you don't see what you're looking for, You've come to the right place.

At a Car Dealership:

The best way to get back on your feet: Miss a car payment.

Outside a Muffler Shop:

No appointment necessary. We heard you coming.

In a Veterinarian's waiting room:

Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!

At the Electric Company:

We would be delighted if you send in your payment on time.

However, if you don't, YOU will be de-lighted.

In a Restaurant Window:

Don't stand there and be hungry; come on in and get fed up.



We Will Never Forget

Radio in the Good Old Days

On those days when you are searching for some good radio listening – when you are tired of sports talk, horrified by the political conversations, don't feel like smiling enough for the Christian music station, do you sometimes long for the days of radio soap operas?

Those dramas were only 15 minutes long. They used a little time at the beginning to review and a little time at the ending to conclude, plus a commercial. A lot of action was packed into the remaining 7-8 minutes of drama.

11:00 -- Wendy Warren, the woman reporter. Pretty progressive for her time. 11:15 -- Aunt Jenny, a recipe show sponsored by Spry – or maybe Crisco. 11:30 -- this was the BEST! Helen Trent, can she still find love after 35? Gil Whitney occasionally would give Helen a piece of jewelry, described in detail. Listeners would have the opportunity to order that piece of jewelry. My mother ordered a blue flower pin with a hidden place for perfume. Helen Trent and Gil Whitney have been kept alive by Roger Erickson and Charlie Boone and more recently, Dave Lee and crew from WCCO.

11:45-- Our Gal Sunday. Can a girl from a mining town in the West find happiness with a wealthy lord from England? (Lord Henry Brinthrop was his name, and he was the ultimate snob.)

Noon -- Cedric Adams took over for the half hour with news and the market reports from South St Paul.

12:30 -- Ma Perkins. She and friend Shuffle ran the lumber yard with son-in-law Willie. They also solved the problems of the little town.

The rest of the afternoon included –

-- Mary Noble, her husband Larry, a Broadway actor who cheated on her constantly.

--Stella Dallas vowed to stay out of her daughter's life because she married "up," but she meddled at least once a day.

The After School Specials included:

Sergeant Preston and his mighty dog, King. Or, The Lone Ranger and his horse Silver and his In-

dian friend, Tonto! The Lone Ranger never got into any trouble because he shot guns out of culprits' hands and always left a silver bullet.

The children's programs also offered wonderful surprises. My brother faithfully collected Little Crow seals from Coco Wheat boxes to send for their Play Set and then waited for the truck to arrive with an enormous box. When the mailman delivered not a box, but an envelope filled with cardboard items to punch out -- reality hit hard!

Sunday afternoons – Before the popularity of the NFL and MLB, the radio was our entertainment. "The Shadow" could cloud men's minds so that he appeared invisible. "Sam Spade" and "Johnny Dollar" solved crimes and addressed women in politically incorrect ways – Doll Dame. No one objected.

Saturday mornings brought "Let's Pretend" and "Grand Central Station." They always announced "It's high noon on Broadway." Well, here in MN it was only 11:00. For years I thought that the term "high noon" meant 11 o'clock. "Inner Sanctum" (or as we called it, "the squeaky door"). Compelling mysteries that I remember to this day. A man with a stop-and-go heart installed a phone in his casket so he could call his wife if his heart began to beat again. The final moments had the wife going out, immediately followed by the phone ringing and ringing.

And we didn't need a picture. Indeed, we knew what every one of those characters looked like, and we imagined Fibber McGee's closet as it tumbled down every week. It was a different time.

*. . . Contributed by Carol Emmans
Maple Grove Historical Preservation Society*



Book Club and More...



Everyone is welcome to the Senior Book Club. They meet the first Wednesday from 9:30-11:30.

October's Discussion: *One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd* by Jim Fergus.

When May Dodd journeys West into the unknown, it's a far better fate than the life she left behind. Committed to an insane asylum by her blue-blood family for loving a man beneath her station, May's only hope of freedom is a secret government program sending "civilized" women to become the brides of Cheyenne warriors. This is the story of May's breathtaking adventures caught between two worlds, loving two men, living two lives.

... Hennepin County Library

November's Discussion: *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* by Louise Erdrich.

This is the story of Father Damien Modeste, priest to his beloved people, the Ojibwe. Modeste, nearing the end of his life, dreads the discovery of his physical identity -- for he is a woman who has lived as a man. For more than a half century, Father Damien Modeste has served the Ojibwe on the remote reservation of Little No Horse. To complicate his fears, his quiet life changes when a troubled colleague comes to the reservation to investigate the life of the perplexing, difficult, possibly false saint Sister Leopolda. Father Damien alone knows the strange truth of Sister Leopolda's piety and is faced with the most difficult decision of his life: Should he reveal all he knows and risk everything? Or should he manufacture a protective history though he believes Leopolda's wonder-working is motivated by evil?

... Good Reads.Com

December's Discussion: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot.

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer, yet her cells -- taken without her knowledge -- became one of the most important tools in medicine. The first "immortal" human cells

grown in culture are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovering secrets of cancer and viruses; helping lead to in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks is buried in an unmarked grave. Her family did not learn of her "immortality" until more than twenty years after her death, when scientists began using her husband and children in research without informed consent. The story of the Lacks family is inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether we control the stuff we are made of--From publisher's description.

... Hennepin County Library

Most People Don't Know These

Oak trees don't produce acorns until they are fifty years of age or older.

The three most valuable brand names on earth: Marlboro, Coca Cola, and Budweiser.

The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for blood plasma.

Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes or shark attacks.

American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one (1) olive from each salad served in first-class.

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise. (Since Venus is normally associated with women, does this tell you women are going the 'right' direction and women are always right?)

Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.

Pearls dissolve in vinegar.

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

Past and Present

Are You a Movie Buff?

When the weather gets cold, it is so pleasant to be in a warm theater waiting for the lights to darken or on your own cozy couch with popcorn looking forward to a couple of hours of entertainment. Once the kids are back in school and most of the blockbuster action movies are done for the summer, we can look forward to some film releases for grown-ups.

Just for fun, let's look back at the highest-grossing movies ever (as adjusted for inflation). They are listed in order from one to ten. How many have you seen?

Gone with the Wind (1939) - This epic film set against the Civil War and Reconstruction broke all records at the time and earned the highest-ever domestic gross in today's dollars.

Star Wars (1977) - The most successful cinematic sci-fi series ever.

The Sound of Music (1965) - By far the most well-known and beloved musical film of all time, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer.

E.T. The Extra Terrestrial (1982) - A coming-of-age story about a boy who befriends an alien.

Titanic (1997) - Director James Cameron's first international smash, before "Avatar," launched the careers of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet.

The Ten Commandments (1956) - This biblical epic has Charlton Heston in his most famous role as Moses.

Jaws (1975) - Steven Spielberg created the summer blockbuster starring Richard Dreyfuss about the great white shark lurking just beneath the surface of the sea.

Doctor Zhivago (1965) - This epic starring British icons Alec Guinness and Julie Christie tells the story of a romance set against the backdrop of World War I.

The Exorcist (1973) - The 1970s horror film about a young girl possessed is widely regarded as the best in the genre.

Snow White (1937) - Walt Disney's first

cel-animated feature-length film, about the princess and the queen fearful of her beauty, is also the Disney Company's biggest hit in adjusted dollars.

... Contributed by Virginia Hanson



Hydration: More Than a Glass of Water.

Especially important in children and in persons 65 and up.

There is less water in the older body, so not drinking enough fluids can cause complications in existing diseases that may result in hospitalization. Chronic diseases of the heart, kidney, liver, stroke, diabetes all impact hydration, as do infections, prolonged vomiting, diarrhea.

Decreased mobility, decreased appetite, or misuse of prescribed medications also impact hydration. Diuretics, sedatives, laxatives, and alcohol can cause the kidneys to work harder, making it harder to maintain fluid balance.

Some signs of dehydration:

Nausea, lethargy, headaches, vomiting, or dizziness may need a doctor's attention.

How to Stay Hydrated:

Every morning it's recommended that we put two quarts of water, lemon water or juice in a pitcher in the refrigerator. By bedtime we should have consumed most of the fluid in the pitcher.

Coffee, tea, colas with caffeine, and alcohol do not count as they cause the body to lose fluids. Decaffeinated teas and coffee are OK. So drink, drink, drink to keep your body hydrated.

... Contributed by Judy Granahan

School Days

Helping Hands

On the first day of school the little old lady looked forward to a quiet cup of hot coffee and a glazed donut in her favorite bakery. She shuffled inside, cane in hand, to an aromatic delight. Holding coffee and donut, she looked for a place to sit.

A little boy sat slouched by a corner table, with worry in his eyes. She sat next to him.

"Is this seat taken?" she asked, not waiting for an answer.

The boy shook his head and stared out the window.

Are you waiting for someone?" she asked.

Pointing out the window, he shook his head and said, "I should be going to that school."

Children, teachers and parents gathered outside the school listening to a tall man pointing here and there.

"And you're not going there because . . .?"

"My mom said I can't cross the street without someone with me. My friend went ahead without me." He slumped low in the chair.

"We're alike, you and I. My son says I shouldn't cross a street without help."

The boy shrugged his shoulders, a tear sliding down his cheek.

She sipped her coffee and took the last bite of her donut. "Would you do me a favor?" she said as she stood.

"What?"

"I must get across the street, and I need someone to go with me."

The boy glanced at her as if to say, Yah, sure.

"Really! My son would be most upset with me if I crossed that busy street by myself. Won't you help me?"

The boy looked out the window, then at the old lady, and back out the window. Slowly he straightened up in his chair, wiped his face, and quietly said, "Okay."

Hand in hand, the little old lady and the little boy crossed the street to the front of the school.

The lady said, "Thank you for helping me today." She guided the boy to the tall man.

The man looked at the boy and said, "I'm Mr. Johnson, the school principal. Welcome to the first day of school!"

The boy vigorously nodded his head and joined the line of children. He looked back at the lady and waved as he entered the school.

The little old lady waved back, nodded to Mr. Johnson, and continued down the street, stepping gingerly in her high-topped tennis shoes with her cane swinging in the air.

... Contributed by Shirley Christenson

Out of the mouths of babes.....

Teacher: How old is your father?

Kid: He is 6 years.

Teacher: What? How is this possible?

Kid: He became father only when I was born.

(Logic!! Children are quick and always speak their minds.)

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now, Class, who discovered America?

Class: Maria.

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile'?

Glenn: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L

Teacher: No, that's wrong.

Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

(I love this child.)

Teacher: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Harold: A teacher.

1949, Dist. 46, Fish Lake School

The Red, Not Blue, Sweater Incident

The second week of August 1949 was upon us. That year both my younger brother Billy and I would be attending Mrs. Shiffmann's one-room Dist. 46 Fish Lake School. My family went into Osseo to shop for new clothes, especially for Billy and I who would be off to school in a few weeks. Shopping began. A beautiful blue cardigan sweater with Mary and Her Little Lamb was bought for me. The same sweater, in red, was bought for my younger sister Dianne. I liked the red one best, but Mom said, "Blue for blondes and red for brunettes." I didn't care, I wanted the red one. We also went to the Osseo Hardware Store to pick out lunch pails.

Finally, the first day of school in 1949 arrived. Billy in his new pants and light jacket, and me in my new dress and my sister's red Mary and Her Little Lamb sweater were ready. It had taken a lot of convincing on my part to talk my mom into letting me wear the red one instead of the blue one. I promised her I'd take very, very good care of it so she said OK. That year Mom didn't have to walk with us. Billy, the neighbor girl across the road, and I walked the almost mile-long dirt road to District 46 Fish Lake School. During that walk all I thought about was taking good care of that red Mary and Her Little Lamb sweater. We got to the school, and while the other kids were playing out in the playground, I stood by the school door not getting any dirt on my sister's sweater. When our teacher, Mrs. Shiffmann, rang her hand bell, school began.

About an hour later a toilet break was needed on my part. I raised my hand for permission to go to the outhouse. Mrs. Shiffmann had a rule that no one went out to the outhouse without a partner. This was a good rule. The person at the desk next to me was my best friend Kathy McKee, also in 2nd grade. She raised her hand to go, too. Out we went, laughing and having a great time. We arrived at the outhouse that had two holes and argued who would use it first and who stayed outside. I won and went in, ever mindful of that red sweater and the trust laid upon me to take care of it. I carefully took off the sweater, folded it neatly and laid it down just out of reach of the toilet hole.

After completing the reason I was there, I reached to unlatch the hook that kept the door locked and brushed against that beautiful red sweater with Mary and Her Little Lamb on the front. Down the hole it went. NO!!! Yes!!! Kathy and I looked at each other, looked down that hole, then at each other again. I was supposed to take care of that sweater! Now it lay floating in the bottom of the hole in a wet slurry of rotten, gag refluxing smelly yuck.

"NO!!! No! No! What to do? I was near tears. Mrs. Schiffmann knocked on the door. She asked if we had a problem. Well, yes we did. We unlocked the door and showed our teacher what had happened. I was totally in tears. Teacher looked down the hole, looked at us, and said, "Stay here, she'd be right back." She came back with a metal coat hanger, opened it up, and now it was a long wire with a hook on the end. She carefully reached into the deep, dark hole, hooked that beautiful red sweater with Mary and Her Little Lamb on it and brought it up out of the hole. It was ruined. It smelled BAD!! I cried harder. I had failed my task.

My sister's sweater was ruined. What would I tell my mother? Teacher said, "Don't worry, we'll drape it over a bush to dry. Then I'll wrap it up for you to take home."

The school day finally ended. Dear Mrs. Shiffmann wrapped that still damp and no longer beautiful red sweater in newspaper, tied it with string, then handed it to me to carry home. I walked the almost a mile road on that warm September afternoon carrying a package that smelled like, well, you know what. My dear brother Billy and my friend Carol ran ahead laughing at my humiliation. Knowing I had some explaining to do to my mother, I arrived home.

I explained the whole sordid story. Was she angry? No!! No? She burst into laughter. In between her peals of laughter she said, "It's ok. Not to worry, the sweater is cotton, and it will wash up nicely." Hooray. It did.

Following that awful, dreadful, and smelly experience, I wore only MY, blue, Mary and Her Little Lamb sweater the rest of the year at Maple Grove's District 46 Fish Lake School.

...Contributed by Sharon Hopkins



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Bits 'n Pieces

GREAT PUMPKIN IS COMIN' TO TOWN

Oh, you'd better not shriek,
You'd better not groan,
You'd better not howl,
You'd better not moan,
Great Pumpkin is coming to town!

He's gonna find out
From folks that he meets
Who deserves tricks
And who deserves treats.
Great Pumpkin is coming to town!

He'll search in every pumpkin patch,
Haunted houses far and near
To see if you've been spreading gloom,
Or bringing lots of cheer.

Oh, you'd better not shriek,
You'd better not groan,
You'd better not howl,
You'd better not moan,
Great Pumpkin is coming to town!



Answer to riddle on page 6: "Get off the Merry - Go - Round and go home. You've had enough excitement for one day."

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The next Newsletter will be published in December. Please submit items for the next issue by November 1, 2016. Please send or bring your stories, jokes, tidbits. to Kris. Rough drafts are welcome.